



Springtime in the Rockies

It has been a busy winter. Although the winter months usually have the lowest visitation, park staff have been working on (among other things) planning, reporting, budgets, and a myriad of other behind the scenes responsibilities.

One of the things we're planning is a memorial tribute to our colleagues Jeff Christensen and Suzi Roberts. On July 29, 2005, Jeff, a seasonal Visitor and Resource Protection Ranger, was on a backcountry patrol in the remote Mummy Range and perished from an accidental fall. Suzi, a Park Ranger at Haleakala National Park, Hawaii, died September 14, 2004, after being struck by a falling boulder while clearing rock fall from a road. Suzi started her ranger career at Rocky Mountain National Park in 1995 as a Student Conservation Association intern. To be a ranger, one must be highly dedicated to serving others, and to protecting our most treasured places. This summer, wayside exhibits on rangers, including tributes to Jeff and Suzi, will be dedicated at both the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center near Estes Park and the Kawuneeche Visitor Center near Grand Lake. We are honored that the parents of both rangers will be here to attend the dedication ceremonies, and we hope this process is both a fitting memorial and a reassurance of the park's steadfast commitment to the memories of these fine rangers.

Another exciting thing the park is involved in planning is an experimental hiker shuttle between the Town of Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park. Read more about it in this issue.

Also, the park is excited about an agreement that was recently signed between the State of Colorado, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Park Service concerning air quality in Rocky Mountain National Park. An article about this follows.

The time to start spring opening of Trail Ridge Road, Glacier Basin Campground, Moraine Park Museum, staff housing units, seasonal water systems and other facilities that have been shut down over the winter is fast approaching. Plowing Trail Ridge Road takes weeks, as does the multitude of other events to get the park ready for summer. Park staff enjoy this annual rite of spring.

Seasonal staff and summer volunteers will start arriving soon to help the year-round staff with summer operations. Considerable time is spent in training our staff and volunteers to be effective and helpful to our many visitors. In 2005, Rocky Mountain National Park had 144 year-round staff, 247 seasonal staff, and 2,114 volunteers. This much human power accomplishes tremendous things, and we hope you are able to visit the park soon to experience and enjoy this special place.

See you out in the park.

Vaughn Baker
Superintendent

Agreement Confirms Commitment of State & Federal Agencies to Address RMNP Air Quality Issues

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Park Service recently signed an agreement in which the Park Service will be working with state and national regulators to develop solutions for air quality issues for Rocky Mountain National Park. Solutions developed to address these issues in the park will be used to benefit other areas as well.

The purpose of this agreement is to establish a collaborative, working relationship among these three agencies. This will assist in the development of air quality management policies and programs to address harmful impacts to air quality and other natural resources occurring in Rocky Mountain National Park.

The goal of this agreement is to assist in the timely development and future implementation of air management policies and programs to reverse the trend of increasing nitrogen-related compound impacts affecting the park.

The objectives of this agreement are: by June 2006, all parties will work to develop a nitrogen deposition goal and/or a proposed air or water quality standard for making progress toward any resource management goals established by the park. Once nitrogen deposition modeling and analyses are completed, efforts will be made to develop a comprehensive program that will effect the necessary emission reductions toward attaining park nitrogen deposition goals and/or applicable standards. Then, the goal of reversing the trend of nitrogen-related impacts will be considered and addressed to the extent possible in the Denver Ozone Action Plan, the regional haze State Implementation Plan (SIP) and any other relevant air quality planning.

"We are optimistic that through collaboration with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and EPA we can truly tackle the air quality issues to help protect this beautiful and special place. We know the American public and residents of Colorado in particular are counting on us to address these critical air quality issues," said Vaughn Baker, Rocky Mountain National Park Superintendent.

Atmospheric deposition at Rocky Mountain National Park includes potentially harmful elements such as sulfur and nitrogen. More than 23 years of scientific research indicates that nitrogen deposition is at elevated levels, potentially 18 to 20 times greater than natural background levels. If this current trend continues unabated, sensitive aquatic species, including fish, could be affected in the next several



Volunteers and/ or researchers hike to Loch Vale to collect precipitation samples weekly to determine the amount and sources of nitrogen compounds being deposited in the park

decades. Artificially elevated levels of nitrogen deposition may also affect unique alpine tundra plant communities, changing the delicate plant composition.

The Colorado Air Quality Control Commission has formed a separate subcommittee to specifically address the nitrogen deposition issue in the park. Information about the Rocky Mountain National Park Initiative can be found at the Website for the Department of Public Health and Environment's Air Pollution Control Division at: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/rmnp.html>

Ride a Bus...

Using the park's free shuttle bus service enables visitors to access many destination and loop hikes along the Bear Lake Road corridor. Shuttle riders can enjoy the beautiful scenery without the distraction and hassle of traffic congestion and limited parking.

2006 Shuttle Schedule for Rocky Mountain National Park

Park shuttle buses run daily from June 16 through October 1. There are two routes: The Bear Lake Route and the Moraine Park Route. Both routes are based at the Park & Ride shuttle bus parking area across from the Glacier Basin Campground. The first bus departs from Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m., and the last bus leaves at 7:00 p.m. The last bus of the day leaves Bear Lake and Fern Lake Trailhead at 7:30 p.m.

The **Bear Lake Route** shuttle makes the round trip between the Park & Ride and Bear Lake. These buses run every 10 to 15 minutes. Shuttle stops along this route are Glacier Basin Campground, Bierstadt Trailhead, Glacier Gorge Trailhead, and Bear Lake. There is no shuttle stop at Sprague Lake.



The **Moraine Park Route** shuttle makes the round trip between the Park & Ride and the Fern Lake Trailhead bus stop. These buses run every 30 minutes. Shuttle stops along this route are Hollowell Park, Tuxedo Park, Moraine Park Museum, Moraine Park Campground, C-Loop, Cub Lake Trailhead, and Fern Lake bus stop.

Experimental Hiker Shuttle Between Town of Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park and the Town of Estes Park will be experimenting this summer with a "hiker shuttle" that will run from the Town of Estes Park Visitor Center to the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. The "hiker shuttle" will operate from July 1 through September 4 on an hourly schedule. The first bus will leave the Town of Estes Park Visitor Center at 9:00 a.m. and the last bus will leave the Park & Ride bound for Estes Park at 8:00 p.m. A park pass will be required to board the bus. Passes can be purchased at automated fee machines located at the Town of Estes Park Visitor Center and Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. This experiment, the first of its kind here, will explore whether visitors are interested in leaving their cars behind in Estes Park to board a bus that brings them directly to Rocky Mountain National Park.

The Town of Estes Park is also planning an experimental in-town shuttle service this summer.

Rocky Mountain Biennial Research Conference

Rocky Mountain National Park's 2006 Biennial Research Conference will be held on April 4 -5 in the Estes Park Town Board Room. More than thirty-five scientists, social scientists, and historians are expected to attend this two-day meeting to discuss projects conducted over the last three years.



Researchers will present for 20 minutes each. Talks are organized into sessions covering related subjects. Tuesday morning will focus on 10,000 years of park history, including talks about historic buildings, trails, and the findings of a five year archeological survey. The afternoon will feature studies of fauna: mountain lions, butterflies, wood frogs, bears, and more.

Tuesday's closing session focuses on visitor experiences in the Highway 7 corridor.

Wednesday begins with geologists looking at the park's volcanoes and glaciers.

Vegetation topics, such as the restoration of Fan Lake and cheatgrass invasion, follow. Wednesday afternoon



researchers will present posters on air quality, hummingbirds, and Myomycetes (also known as slime molds) in an informal gathering from 2-3 pm. The conference will conclude with talks on soil nutrient availability at treeline and stream invertebrates in the Upper Colorado River.



Although not specifically geared to the general public, the conference is free and open to all who are interested. A complete schedule is available at www.nps.gov/romo, or call Cheri Yost at 970/586-1394 for more information.

The Town Board Room is in the Estes Park Municipal Building, 170 MacGregor Ave, Estes Park, Colorado 80517.

Dealing With Bark Beetles

In Rocky Mountain National Park there are 16 species of bark beetles in the family *Dendroctonus* and *Ips* that have evolved with the local forest ecosystem. During the last five years the acreage of bark beetle infestations has increased tenfold throughout the western U. S., largely due to drought conditions and dense forest stands. Colorado is experiencing extremely large infestation in areas including the Vail, Gunnison and Fraser Valleys. A bark beetle outbreak is ongoing in the area around Grand Lake and within Rocky Mountain National Park.

Although part of a natural process, beetle-killed trees can threaten the safety of the public and park employees and can cause property damage if weakened trees topple. Also, beetle-killed trees contribute to forest fuels that can modify wildfire behavior. A Bark Beetle Management Plan for Rocky Mountain National Park was approved in July 2005. The management plan allows bark beetles to continue their life cycles unimpeded in natural areas of the park. In developed, high use areas of the park, high-value trees would be protected from bark beetles. High-value trees are living pine and spruce trees that provide shade for campgrounds, picnic areas, parking lots, structures or other facilities, provide visual screening in the same areas, have



Resin masses called pitch tubes are sure signs that that mountain pine beetles have infested this ponderosa pine tree

cultural significance, provide exceptional and irreplaceable habitat for wildlife, provide exceptional and irreplaceable seed source, or have outstanding visual qualities. The park has an ongoing program to monitor impacts in developed areas of the park to assess high value trees.

Park staff who will deal with the beetles this year have full plates. Currently staff are cleaning up trees that were infested with beetles last fall. Their primary area of concern is the west side of the park, with attention also given to the east side. Starting in mid-April the trees will be removed, and in May these trees, which contain live beetles, will be burned in an extremely efficient Air Curtain Burner.

Following protocols established in the Bark Beetle Management Plan, the park is proposing to spray 1,000 high value trees with the insecticide Carbaryl. This project, planned for May, will spray 900 trees on the west side of the park and 100 trees on the east side. Public notification will take place beforehand, including letters to a mailing list of interested persons.

Also, the park is looking into using pheromone packets as a repellent to protect trees in high value areas at the Holzwarth Historic Site and Timber Creek Campground.

In the Grand Lake Lodge area, the park is coordinating beetle management with fire management activities. Staff will look for beetle infested trees to remove while mechanical thinning is going on. The park plans to thin this dense forest to reduce the risk of large fires.

Bark beetles generally attack trees in late June through September. They bore tunnels under the bark of pine and spruce trees and lay eggs. An individual female may lay in excess of 100 eggs. Following egg hatch, larvae feed in the phloem layer of the tree. The larvae will spend approximately 8 months feeding before transforming into pupae. Emergence of new adults can begin in late June and continue through September, where they will once again repeat this process.

By late May, park staff plan to have these projects in developed areas accomplished. Staff will monitor these areas through the summer, and will follow up in the late summer-early fall to see what needs to be done next.

Temporary Closures to Protect Nesting Raptors

Rocky Mountain National Park officials are enforcing annual temporary (March 11 through April 30) closures to protect raptor nesting sites in the Lumpy Ridge and Sheep Mountain areas of the park. To enable wildlife managers to gather information and ensure that raptors can nest undisturbed, specific areas within the park are closed temporarily to public use during nesting season. These closures may be extended longer or rescinded at an earlier date if determined necessary.



Red-tailed Hawk. These common raptors live in forests and hunt rodents in open lands.

Closures include:

Checkerboard Rock, Lightning Rock, Batman Rock, Batman Pinnacle, Thunder Buttress, The Parish, Alligator Rock, Sheep Mountain, Deer Ridge Buttress and Twin Owls, Rock One. These closures include the named formations as well as areas extending 100 yards in all directions from these formations. The perimeter around Alligator Rock extends for 200 yards in all directions. Closures include all climbing routes, outcroppings, cliffs, faces, ascent and descent routes and climber access trails to the named rock formations.

The National Park Service is committed to preserving birds of prey. The same cliffs that attract raptors also appeal to climbers. The cooperation of climbing organizations and individuals is essential to the successful nesting of raptors in the park.

❄️ Current Snow Water Equivalents as of March 26, 2006

West Side Snotels

Lake Irene	71" snow depth	99% of average
Phantom Valley	31" snow depth	114% of average
Total		103% of average

East Side Snotels

Bear Lake	52" snow depth	100% of average
Copeland Lake	12" snow depth	193% of average
Willow Park	53" snow depth	91% of average
Total		103% of average

From the Natural Resources Conservation Service Website

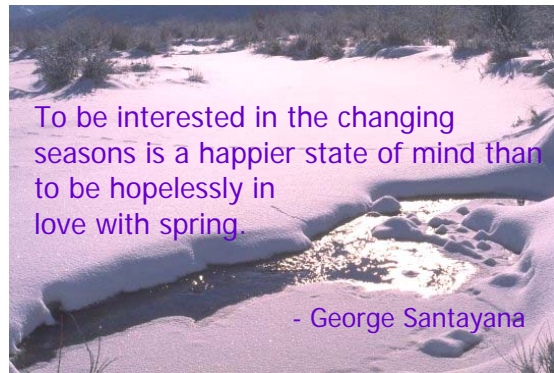
Two New NPS Units

On February 27, 2006, two new units were added to the National Park Service (NPS) system, bringing the total number of sites administered by the NPS to 390. Both of these sites contribute to the African American legacy: the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site (NHS) in Washington, DC, and the African Burial Ground National Monument (NM) in New York City, NY.

The Carter G. Woodson Home NHS was established by publication of a notice in the Federal Register on February 27, 2006. The Historic Site, a Victorian 1890s red brick rowhouse sits in the middle of the District's Shaw neighborhood, was the Washington, DC, home of Dr. Carter G. Woodson. A preeminent educator and historian, Dr. Woodson was instrumental in establishing African American history as an academic discipline and is best known for establishing Negro History Week in 1926, now recognized as African American History Month (or Black History Month). In 1915, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a historian trained at Harvard and a DC Public School teacher, founded the Association for the Study of Life and History, now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) (visit <http://www.asalh.org>). For more information phone 202-673-2402.

The site of the African Burial Ground National Monument was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1993 and as a National Monument by Presidential Proclamation on February 27, 2006. President Bush signed the Proclamation under the Antiquities Act of 1906, which is celebrating its 100th Anniversary of enactment this year. The site was re-discovered in 1991, when construction began on a Federal office building in lower Manhattan. Building planners were aware that the site once held a cemetery, but assumed there would be no vestige of the past still to be found. Instead, 20 feet below the surface lay the remains of free and enslaved Africans, and in October 2003, the remains of 419 were re-interred. Archeologists confirmed the site to be of unprecedented national and international historical significance. The African Burial Ground is part of an original seven-acre site containing the estimated remains of approximately 15,000 people, making it the largest and oldest African cemetery excavated in North America. For more information, visit <http://www.africanburialground.org>

Source: *InsideNPS*



Lyceum Series

The theme of the Spring 2006 Lyceum is "Partners in Protection, Partners in Progress," a salute to all groups who work with us to achieve the goal of cooperative conservation. The National Park Service relies on a multitude of other groups and agencies to complete its mission. Speakers will present programs celebrating the wide variety of projects and planning efforts they have contributed to this special place as part of a working partnership. The Lyceum schedule runs until May 20, 2006; remaining programs are listed below. Programs are on Saturday evenings at 7:00 p.m. at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center on Highway 36 west of Estes Park. Please join us!

4/1 Jim Lindberg, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, will talk about saving history through the National Historic Landmark program. RMNP's Beaver Meadows Visitor Center will be featured.

4/8 Katherine Timm, Colorado State University, and Scott Sticha, RMNP, will discuss the Front Range Fuels Treatment Program

4/15 Eric D. Adams, Executive Director of MacGregor Ranch

4/22 Judy Geniac, NPS Geoscientists-in-the-Park, will show us how to "Discover the Breadth and Awe of our Nation's Incredible Geology"

4/29 Duane R. Kitzis, NOAA Climate Monitoring and Diagnostics Lab

5/6 Kimberly Kosmenko, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers

5/13 League of Women Voters and NPS Natural Sounds Program representatives to discuss Successful Grassroots Efforts in RMNP

5/20 Curt Buchholtz, Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, will talk about RMNA and RMNP celebrating 75 years of successful partnership

Rocky Mountain Nature Association Turns 75

In 2006, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) celebrates 75 years of partnership with Rocky Mountain National Park. Created in 1931, RMNA is a nonprofit cooperating association founded to assist and support the National Park Service with interpretation, education and research goals at Rocky Mountain National Park. RMNA has expanded this support to Florissant Fossils Beds National Monument as well as to other areas administered by the U. S. Forest Service, Colorado State Parks, U. S. Geologic Survey and the Bureau of Land Management.

As the park's cooperating association, RMNA publishes and retails educational materials at park visitor centers and museums for visitors, as well as conducts field seminars



complementary to the educational and interpretive programming offered by the National Park Service. A percentage of gross receipts are available to the National Park Service as Aid-to-Park contributions for a variety of interpretive and research purposes.

On December 1, 2005, RMNA legally merged with the Rocky Mountain National Park Associates (RMNPA). It now has one Board of Directors and one Executive Director and staff. This one entity is also now the principal fundraiser for the benefit of Rocky Mountain National Park and the programs of the National Park Service. Fundraised dollars go into a new fund called the Rocky Mountain National Park Fund. RMNA (formerly RMNPA), with NPS oversight, has completed projects that fulfill the NPS goals of preserving natural, cultural, and historic resources and serving visitor needs. Since 1986, charitable contributions are valued in excess of \$10,000,000. Some of the contributions by this organization to the NPS include the following:

- Rehabilitation of the Loch/Sky Pond Trail (ongoing 2004-2006).
- Fundraising is continuing for Lake Irene trail improvements (just west of Milner Pass on Trail Ridge Road) and Timber Creek Campground

Amphitheater rehabilitation. Both are scheduled for work in 2006.

- Purchase of 30 Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) for the park. So far, at least three visitor lives have been saved in the park by staff using AEDs. The park hopes to have AEDs available at busy visitor use locations such as campgrounds and visitor centers, as well as ranger patrol vehicles.
- Organization of the American Conservation Corps (funded through Daniels Fund 2003 - present).
- Stabilization of the Wigwam Tea Room (main cabin) along the Aspen Brook Trail between Lily Lake and Highway 66. Phase I of this project will be completed in the spring of 2006.
- Various land acquisition projects primarily along the boundary of the park. Most recently, the Fahy property in the Kawuneeche Valley was purchased with the intention of protecting it through U. S. Forest Service stewardship.
- Construction of the new Lily Lake Accessible Restroom (completed in 2004).
- Rehabilitation of Endovalley Picnic Area (completed in 2004).
- Rehabilitation of the Mills/Black Lake Trail (completed in 2003).
- Design and construction of the Fall River Visitor Center and interpretive exhibits (completed in 2000).

RMNA membership offers complimentary quarterly newsletters, 15% discount on publications and a 10% discount on most field seminars.

The park greatly appreciates the efforts of RMNA, which provides this financial support from so many park supporters and donors. Contact RMNA for additional information at (970) 586-0108, or visit their website at rmna.org.



Bear Lake Monthly Snow Totals

Dec 2001: 28.0"	Jan 2002: 31.2"	Feb 2002: 20.2"
Dec 2002: 14.5"	Jan 2003: 24.2"	Feb 2003: 63.5"
Dec 2003: 32.2"	Jan 2004: 35.3"	Feb 2004: 23.8"
Dec 2004: 19.0"	Jan 2005: 39.5"	Feb 2005: 33.5"
Dec 2005: 57.0"	Jan 2006: 44.0"	Feb 2006: 31.7"

Grand Lake Lodge – A Grand Old Lady at 85

Last summer Grand Lake Lodge quietly turned 85 years old. Like many octogenarians, the lodge has had a full life. It began with an eagerly anticipated “birth,” has many rich memories, suffered a great tragedy, and today maintains a dignified elegance reminiscent of days gone by.

Grand Lake Lodge opened in 1920, a time when numerous lodges and dude ranches were being constructed around the newly-established Rocky Mountain National Park. However, Grand Lake Lodge’s origin was unique. It was the only lodge constructed on existing park-owned land and with the park Superintendent’s enthusiastic input and endorsement.

Origin of the Lodge

When Rocky Mountain National Park was established in 1915, construction was well underway on Old Fall River Road, the first road to cross this part of the Rockies. Realizing that the road would greatly increase tourism, Superintendent L. Claude Way wanted to establish overnight lodging on the park’s west side. Some time between 1917 and 1919, Superintendent Way and the lone west side ranger, Howard Beehler, found a level area of park land above the town of Grand Lake with magnificent views that they felt would be ideal. Way and Beehler envisioned a camp for the site, likely a facility consisting of wooden platforms with canvas tents .

The camp never was built. Instead, a beautiful rustic two-story log and stone structure rose on the site. The vision for the Grand Lake Lodge is generally credited to Roe Emery, a former concessioner from Glacier National Park. Emery moved to Colorado in 1912, purchased several bus lines, formed the Rocky Mountain Parks Transportation Company and began bringing visitors from Front Range railroad stations up to Estes Park. In 1919, RMNP granted Emery the concession to provide bus service within the park.

With the bus concession in hand, Roe Emery proposed a Grand Circle Tour, where his buses would pick up passengers at the Denver railroad station for a four-day journey that would take them through the park via Old Fall River Road with overnight stays in Estes Park, Grand Lake, and Idaho Springs. The park’s west side “camp” location would provide lodging on the middle leg of the journey.

Emery’s vision attracted A.D. Lewis, who owned the Lewiston Hotel in Estes Park. Lewis provided the funds to build the lodge, which he later sold to Emery in 1923.

Superintendent Way heartily endorsed the lodge and was keenly interested in its construction.

Workers broke ground, likely in 1919. Trees were cut in Bowen Gulch, and hauled by horse and wagon to a



Grand Lake Lodge in 1956

small sawmill north of the lodge, where they were cut to size. The logs were then hauled to a finishing mill at the site. As the lodge began to take shape, Superintendent Way requested that an L-shaped wing be built at the back rather than the front of the hotel in order to preserve the views. Way said that the appearance of the building far exceeded his expectations and stated, “I feel this hotel will be one of the most popular in Rocky Mountain National Park.”

On July 3, 1920, the lodge opened with a grand ball. The two story building contained a kitchen, dining area, and lobby with a porch that encompassed a view of Grand Lake and the surrounding mountains. Two months later, Old Fall River Road opened and tourism markedly increased.

The first year, there were no overnight accommodations at Grand Lake Lodge. Construction continued for several more years, adding small rustic guest cabins and other facilities. Eventually over 100 structures were added to the site.

Roe Emery’s Circle Tour of the Colorado Rockies was a success. His buses met passengers at the Denver train station and took them to his Estes Park Chalet (now called Mary’s Lake Lodge) for their first night, the Grand Lake Lodge for the second, his other hotel, the Hot Springs Hotel in Idaho Springs for the third, and then back to the Denver train station. Emery’s buses were called the “white autos” and could seat 11 people. The Circle Tour operated from the early 1920s to the early 1970s, and was one of the first western tours to offer meals, lodging, transportation, and sightseeing in one package.

The James Family Legacy

In 1952, Emery sold his company to T.J. Manning of Denver, who sold it to Ted and Isaac James in 1953.

In the sale, the James brothers acquired the bus company, the Grand Lake Lodge, the Estes Park Chalet, and Trail Ridge Store at Fall River Pass, but opted not to purchase the hotel in Idaho Springs. As the new park concessioner, the James family also developed the Hidden Valley Ski Area beginning in 1955.

The James family began a long legacy with the park spanning three generations that lasts to this day. Ted James, with his son Ted Jr., ran the Estes Park Chalet, Grand Lake Lodge, and Trail Ridge Store, while his brother Isaac focused on the transportation company. It was truly a family business. Ted Sr. and his wife, Perry, lived in Estes Park and he had his main office in the Estes Park Chalet, where he could manage the Chalet and the Hidden Valley Ski Area. Ted Jr. married his wife, Sue, in 1954 and they spent their first two summers living in the basement of the Trail Ridge Store, managing the store. Sue remembers eating hot dogs and barbecue sandwiches for breakfast, lunch and dinner because those were the only items on the store's menu. In 1956, Ted and Sue began living during the summers in one of the cabins at the lodge, along with their growing family of eventually four children. Here, they could oversee both the lodge and the store. Their cabin was one of the larger cabins, the Ford Cabin, named for Henry Ford who once stayed there. It did not have a kitchen, so Sue cooked on a portable hot plate or outdoor grill, and washed their dishes in the bathtub.

Ted Sr.'s wife, Perry, managed the jewelry section of Trail Ridge Store and did the buying of authentic Indian jewelry for the store, Grand Lake Lodge, and the Estes Park Chalet. Perry earned a reputation as one of the foremost Indian jewelry authorities in America.

Each of Ted and Perry's three children was involved in the family businesses at some point in their lives. Daughter Barbara worked at Trail Ridge Store for a couple of years. Daughter Judy also worked at the store and met her future husband there one summer. Son Ted Jr. devoted his career to the store and the lodge, and his four children were all brought up at the lodge. Today, grandson Reed is the manager of the lodge.

Tourism in the 50s, 60s, and 70s

The 50s, 60s, and 70s were golden years for the lodge. In those days most visitors arrived via bus tours. Isaac James' Grayline buses brought guests, as did several other bus companies. The James family offered one and two-day Circle Tour packages. The one day tour picked up passengers in Denver, took them to the

lodge for lunch, then over Trail Ridge Road to the Estes Park Chalet for the night, and back to Denver. The two-day package brought guests to the Chalet for the first night and the Lodge for the second night.



When the buses pulled up to the lodge, the lodge staff would come out on the front porch and sing a welcome song as guests disembarked. The guests then went into the lodge to get their cabin assignments. The lodge operated on the American Plan, where guests were given tickets for each meal. Breakfast was an egg dish cooked to order. Lunch was a large buffet complete with pastries that came over fresh daily from the Chalet. Dinner consisted of a choice of about 5 entrees.

Guests relaxed in the lodge's lobby, played cards, and enjoyed the views. Evening entertainment was provided three nights a week by the staff, who put on skits and musicals. One night a week guests played bingo with prizes from the gift shop. Another night each week a park naturalist presented a program, which was very high-tech for those days using slide projectors and a dissolve unit.

The next morning guests placed their suitcases on their cabin porches before breakfast and two bellmen, driving a 1940s pick-up truck, collected the luggage to place on the right buses. When the guests boarded the buses for departure, the lodge staff sang them a goodbye song.

Working at the Lodge

To be an employee, an applicant had to have a talent such as singing, acting, or playing a musical instrument. Each summer up to 100 college students filled the positions.

Employees lived in large dorms at the lodge – one dorm for men and one for women. Each dorm had a "house mother" and curfew hours.

Employees came back often for several summers. One young college student, Bob Scott, came back year after year for 38 seasons! Through the years Bob served as maitre d', dining room manager, housing manager, hospitality manager, and sales manager. He remembers several instances in which children of

former employees came to work summers at the lodge. Bob also knows of over 100 married couples that met while working during those golden summers!

Saving the Lodge

As part of the Mission 66 program which started in 1955, the NPS focused on removing private property within the park. Throughout the '50s and early '60s the NPS purchased many properties and removed hotels such as Fall River Lodge, Bear Lake Lodge, Sprague Hotel, and Glacier Basin Lodge. Wanting to save the Grand Lake Lodge, the James brothers offered to purchase and exchange other private lands within the park for the land surrounding the Lodge. In January 1963, an act of Congress authorized the land exchange and changed the park boundaries to exclude the lodge.

Tragedy Strikes

On July 19, 1973, tragedy struck. The lodge's kitchen doors were closed, causing a buildup of gases near the ceiling. A kitchen grill ignited the gases, which exploded, blasting a hole in the ceiling. The heat was high enough to melt light fixtures and telephones in the lobby. Employees tossed chairs, Indian rugs, and other valuables over the porch railing to salvage them. Three fire trucks responded, one from the park, one from Grand Lake, and one from Granby. They all ran out of water. Fortunately there was a swimming pool directly in front of the lodge. The manager's children jumped into the pool and held the fire hoses underwater. The fire trucks were able to siphon water from the swimming pool and douse the flames.

Fortunately, the building was saved. Had the lodge been built with steel beams, the extreme heat would have melted them and the roof would have collapsed. Though the wooden beams were severely scorched, they were still structurally sound. The James family was told it would be more economical to bulldoze the building and rebuild, but they wanted to preserve the original. For two summers, workers hand-scraped the burned surfaces of the log beams and wood floors. For seven years the lodge was closed to overnight guests while craftsmen refurbished the interior. In 1980, the front desk portion of the lodge reopened and guests once again stayed overnight in the cabins. In 1981 the full building reopened.

Making the Best Out of the Fire

After the fire, the lodge became the domain of employees and workers for seven years. Only the college students who worked at Trail Ridge Store continued to live in the cabins, riding an old white bus

nicknamed, "Old Hoss" up and down the mountain each day. Because the main lodge had been gutted of furniture, the manager, Ted Jr., decided to have some fun. He bought roller skates and each night allowed the employees to skate round and round in the lodge. He brought electricity in for lights and held square dances. Before dancing, the staff would mop as much of the black soot off of the floors as possible. They nicknamed the lodge, "the burned-out ballroom."

In Bob Scott's words, "it was like a summer camp after hours for the employees." Ted Jr. expected them to work hard by day, but they could also play hard at night!

The Lodge Today

After the Lodge reopened in 1981, it was to a different period of tourism. Bus tours were no longer the mainstay of business; rather, visitors arrived more frequently by cars.

The reputation of the dining room grew with the addition of some very good executive chefs and additional menu items. David

MacDougal started the famous Sunday brunches in the early '80s, which are still popular today.

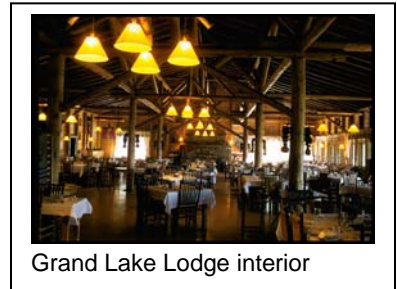
The James family has been dedicated to the preservation of the lodge. In 1993, Grand Lake Lodge, including over 100 buildings, was designated a National Historic Landmark.

Grand Lake Lodge carries its 85 years well. When you visit, it is easy to slip into a feeling of days gone by. Not only is the lodge still popular for overnight stays, but it is popular with folks who go to enjoy the food, and to sit on "Colorado's favorite front porch" and take in the views. While on the porch, look for evidence of the past – there are still scorch marks visible here from the 1973 fire!

Change is in motion for the lodge. In 2001, the 71 acres containing the lodge was annexed to the Town of Grand Lake. The James family is developing about 16 of those acres as single family home sites.

This summer is expected to be the last season the James family will operate the lodge. It is currently for sale.

By Leanne Benton, Park Ranger



Grand Lake Lodge interior

A New Rotary Plow for the East Side

Plowing Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park is an annual springtime event. Working over a period of many weeks, plow operators make it possible for the road to open (most years) by the Friday preceding Memorial Day weekend.

The spring opening process is laborious, exposing equipment operators and the heavy equipment mechanic to unpredictable, violent high altitude weather events combined with icy roads, low visibility, and temperatures with wind chills well below zero degrees.

A new rotary snowplow was acquired last fall for the Colorado River District (CRD), which used it during normal winter plowing

operations. They are looking forward to using it for spring opening of Trail Ridge Road. A new rotary plow is due to be delivered in April for east side operations, and will also be in place for the spring opening of Trail Ridge Road.

As with the CRD's plow, this new plow will increase productivity with fewer mechanical failures, provide safety features not available in the older models the park has been using such as better visibility from operators seat, advanced sound deadening capability, and enhanced ergonomics to reduce repetitive motion injuries and general fatigue. Also, diesel technology has advanced and figures suggest a 10% to 15% fuel savings with the new rotary plows.

Plow operators can encounter severe climatic conditions atop Trail Ridge Road. Snow depths can tower over 20 feet. Storms can drift snow into already plowed areas, requiring plow operators to re-plow the road, usually several times over. When asked if operators find it frustrating to re-plow after storms, Operations and Maintenance Facility Manager Bill Thompson replied that plow operators thrive on spring opening, that it brings them joy to accomplish what they do for our visitors!

Variabilities in weather conditions normally preclude opening Trail Ridge Road before Memorial Day



The new east side rotary plow will be just like the new Colorado River District snowplow

weekend. However, the new rotary snowplow will make the process safer and more efficient.

Fuels Management and Prescribed Fire

The park implements hazardous fuels reduction projects through mechanical/manual treatment methods and prescribed fire to reduce wildland fire risks. 800 acres of fuels reduction was accomplished in fiscal year 2005.

Rocky Mountain National Park fire crews, using

chainsaws and hand tools, remove dead and downed woody materials, and thin closely spaced live trees to create fuel breaks. Some dead standing trees and downed material may remain in place as wildlife habitat. The excess vegetation is disposed of in several ways. Material may be piled and burned on site when conditions permit, hauled away to be burned off-site when conditions permit or utilized as firewood or fencing materials.

These fuel reduction projects are designed to combat both the intensity and available fuel for fires. It has been demonstrated that when wildfires approach treated areas, rate of spread generally slows and they are usually much more easily controlled. While

fuel reduction projects are an important part of fire management, there are also a number of inherent challenges. These projects are very labor intensive, with relatively high treatment costs. They require periodic maintenance treatments and are best supported by private landowner participation on neighboring properties. Fuel breaks alone are not enough to prevent wildfires, but will allow for more effective fire management and can be valuable in community protection efforts on the wildland urban interface.



Forest before Wildland Urban Interface thinning



Forest after Wildland Urban Interface thinning

Where Do Boreal Toads Spend the Winter?

In the fall there is snow in the high country, the leaves are mostly gone and there is a definite nip in the air. For the boreal toads (*Bufo boreas*) in Rocky Mountain National Park, this means that it's time to find a cozy ground squirrel burrow or well-insulated niche in a beaver dam to "hole-up" for the winter. Boreal toads may spend over half of their lives hibernating. Unfortunately, very little is known about their wintertime behavior or the microclimate of their hibernacula, the place where they hibernate.



A boreal toad in Rocky Mountain National Park

Amphibians at more northern latitudes tend to hibernate on land rather than in the water. Overwintering in a terrestrial environment may minimize the risk of predation and does not put the animal at risk of anoxia (physiologically inadequate supply of oxygen) or hypoxia (failure of oxygen to be utilized by body tissues), a likely possibility for amphibians in pond environments where the frozen pond is also covered by snow. The challenge toads face is finding a hibernaculum that is moist and yet does not freeze. A good hibernaculum must not get too cold or dry, protect against predators, maintain oxygen levels, and still supply cues to trigger emergence from hibernation.

Boreal toads may hibernate in rock chambers near streams or in small mammal burrows or beaver dams. Hibernacula near streams provide an environment that is kept above freezing by the proximity of running water. Hibernacula in burrows or beaver dams depend on depth below the frost line and insulation to prevent freezing. Boreal toads have been seen out of their burrows during the winter on warm, sunny days, basking in the sunshine.

Boreal toads emerge from their hibernacula in the spring and make their way to communal breeding

ponds. In Rocky Mountain National Park, research suggests that males return almost every year to breeding ponds while females may return to breed only once every 2 - 5 years. Breeding in the park ranges from mid-May to early July, depending on the snowpack that year.

For more information, you may want to visit the USGS Fort Collins Science Center Website: <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/resources/education/borealtoad/borealtoad.asp>.

Provided by Dr. Erin Muths, USGS



This is the most beautiful place on earth. There are many such places. Every man, every woman, carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary.

—Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire